



CITY OF RENO PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION

RAN members are committed to being environmentally responsible. They are engaged in multiple efforts to encourage recycling, bag reuse and decreased reliance on plastic shopping bags. For the past 30 years, most food retailers have offered customers a choice of either plastic or paper bags. In the past several years, retailers have responded to consumer demand and extended a tradition of social responsibility by providing recycling receptacles for used plastic bags, providing plastic, paper and reusable bags with recycled content and offering customers a credit ranging from 3-5 cents for each bag that is reused. In addition, many retailers are training employees to fill bags fuller and minimize double-bagging to reduce the number of bags used.

Plastic Bags:

- All of our chain grocers and general merchandisers currently offer recycle bins in their Northern Nevada stores. There is a growing market for recycled plastic. Increasing recycling at all levels presents a viable opportunity for sustainability of both retailers and the environment.
- Recycling data is not collected at the store level. It is typically collected monthly or quarterly at the distribution center (DC). We have compiled recycling data from several retailers in Reno (names kept confidential for proprietary purposes):
 - Retailer 1 – quarterly figures
 - Their DC services 47 stores and recycled 32,340 pounds of plastic bags/film which is the equivalent of 688 pounds per store.
 - Retailer 2 – monthly figures
 - Purchase 1,292 pounds of plastic bags for each store
 - Recycle 1,094 pounds of plastic bags/film from each store (estimated that 40% of that figure, or 438 pounds, are plastic bags collected back from customers)
 - Retailer 3 – monthly figures
 - Purchase 1,600 pounds of plastic bags for each store
 - Recycle 552 pounds of plastic bags/film from each store
 - Retailer 4 – yearly figures
 - Recycled 86,500 pounds of plastic bags/film from Northern Nevada Stores in 2007. Forecast that figure to top 120,000 pounds for 2008.

Reusable Shopping Bags:

- All of our chain grocers and general merchandisers currently offer reusable shopping bags for sale in their Northern Nevada stores.
- According to a Food Marketing Institute study, retailers across America report that consumer demand for reusable bags is increasing. This is an indication that consumer behavior is changing.



- Food poisoning and theft are potential drawbacks of the increased use of reusable bags.
 - There have been cases reported of consumers spreading contaminants to food items placed in unwashed, reusable shopping bags.
 - Retailers are also concerned about the detection of theft when various bags are carried into their stores.

Next Steps:

- RAN members support recycling plastic bags and the sale of reusable shopping bags instead of implementing a ban or ordinance. Other options that they have offered are:
 - Develop and promote consumer education programs to encourage recycling and reduction of bag use and litter.
 - Participate in school programs to promote reusable bags and anti-litter messages.
 - Provide assistance to other retail types on how to set up a recycling program.
 - Participate in media events (press releases, message in newspaper ads and circulars, reusable bag give-away) to further spread the message.

Contact Information:

- In addition to working closely with our members, RAN also works with the Progressive Bag Alliance, the American Chemistry Council, the Food Marketing Institute, the National Retail Federation and the Retail Industry Leaders of America. RAN has compiled information from each of these organizations regarding facts and statistics for plastic bags, paper bags and reusable bags and related public policy across the nation. We would be happy to provide any of this information.
- Please contact Tracey Woods at 775-846-2036 or Lea Lipscomb at 775-721-3541.